

August 1, 2022

I would like to thank you, Judge Bryan, for allowing me to express my feelings of contriteness and acceptance of responsibility for my eformous actions in this case. There is nothing that I can say to unopscure the banal activities of betrayal towards everyone involved. My lack of professionalism, selfishness and lack of better judgement has created a panoply of disappointment, hurt, shame, guilt and a monetary deficit loss to all those affected directly or indirectly. The only thing that I can offer in this stage of my conviction is an explanation of my onerous mindset during the time of the offense. My life has been one of constant dysfunction and struggle stemming from my childhood and continuing into adulthood. The challenges of living a consuetudinary life have been cause and effects of child abuse; both physically and verbally. A life of poverty and constant parental drug and alcohol abuse, violence and fear has obviously had a ineffective and negative influence on my entire life. I have lived most of my adult life suppressing the memories and immoral activities from my past. Inexorably, choosing drugs/alcohol to cope with both pre and post military PTSD, has placed my life in constant turmoil. Throughout the duration of my employment with the Employment Security Department in 2020, I was a functioning addict and I was obviously consumed and enmeshed with my habit. My trustworthiness and professional subterfuge was inevitably compromised the moment that I chose to sell my soul and crossed the moral boundary to commit fraud, bribery and identity theft.

There is not one minute in every day that I do not feel ashamed, guilty and sorry for what I did. There are no excuses from my negative past to permit failure as an alibi. From every molecule of my secular human body, to the depth of my soul... I am so sorry for what I have done. I am sorry for all of the hurt I have caused, the damage of the

trust instilled in me by the State employees, the victims, the victims families and my family, as well. I am sorry for causing even more grief during the pandemic, which was already a vituperation in itself. I am sorry for becoming, yet another statistic in the Federal prison system causing countless hours of investigation, discovery, defense and court operations.

This being my first time experiencing prison, sure has been a life changing lesson. Although this is not a place that I ever thought I would end up in, prior to committing my crimes, I did this to myself. Yet being here, I have been able to take a real in-depth look at my life. It has allowed me to outweigh the contrivances and failures in my life and take an infinitesimal self inventory. I can see where my life was heading and inevitably, I am in that place as we speak. Albeit, prison is not a favorable destination, it's not an achievement, nor is it ever planned, but to some, it is a necessity. Without sounding sated with my situation, I have to concede that even though the crime may be unforgivable or irreversible, the incarceration part has been a sort of blessing in my situation. I was on a path of destruction not just to myself but towards society as well. Before; I lacked the will to live, I lacked conviction and I had no goals or future plans to thrive for. In my eyes, I was worthless and going nowhere. Then came the necessity to adjust to being a prison inmate. I felt as if my whole life came to an end. Would the feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment and sorrow ever subside? How could I ever make amends for something like this? What's the point in living? And every other depressing thought one can imagine lingered in my mind. As time went on, and after reading several self-help books and listening to other inmates' stories, something changed inside of me. Some of these inmates are looking at 5, 10, 15 and even 25 years for their crimes. It dawned

On me that although our crimes are much different our lives and mindsets were similar in many ways. I realized that, unless I change my ways, I could just as easily wind up making those bad decisions and could be looking at those kind of prison sentences as well. I have to look at this experience as not a means to an end, but as a new beginning. There is still time and ways to make amends. I can choose to spend the rest of my life becoming a better person. I can live a proper life, work and pay restitution. I can seek treatment for PTSD and drug treatment and avoid living like I tried and failed already in the past. Perhaps I can become a chemical dependency counselor and share my experience and testimony. I have the passion to serve the community to give back to society; that which I have taken away. If I can help one person avoid making the same mistakes that I made, then that would be one less broken person in the community. I am only getting older and I want to be a better person. I want to be able to show that even though I made this huge mistake, a person can change the course of their life. I believe this experience has changed my life in a positive way. I have experienced what happens to a person who chooses to make bad decisions, chooses drugs and alcohol in their life, and chooses to commit crimes. Recidivism is the ultimate action to avoid in my future because I know the repercussions. Saying that I am sorry will never seem sufficient. I wish there were a more poignant word to express my feelings. At this point, it's my future actions, decision making and behavior that will become poignant.

Bryan Stevenson is the Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative in Alabama and a professor

of law at New York University Law School. He is also the author of the #1 New York Times bestseller 'Just Mercy'. There is a passage in this book that touched my heart and compelled me to quote, "We are all broken by something. We have all hurt someone and been hurt. We all share the condition of brokenness even if our brokenness is not equivalent." Thomas Merton said: "We are bodies of broken bones."

I guess I'd always known but never fully considered that being broken is what makes us human. We all have our reasons. Sometimes we're fractured by the choices we make; Sometimes we're shattered by things we would never have chosen. But our brokenness is also the source of our common humanity, the basis of our shared search for comfort, meaning, and healing. Our shared vulnerability and imperfection nurtures and sustains our capacity for compassion. We have a choice. We can embrace our humanness, which means embracing our broken natures and the compassion that remains our best hope for healing. Or we can deny our brokenness, forswear compassion, and, as a result, deny our own humanity. Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done. If someone tells a lie, that person is not just a liar. If you take something that doesn't belong to you, you are not just a thief. I am more than broken. In fact, there is a strength, a power even, in understanding brokenness, because embracing our brokenness creates a need and desire for mercy, and perhaps a corresponding need to show mercy. When you experience mercy, you learn things that are hard to learn otherwise. You see things you can't otherwise see; you hear things you can't otherwise hear. You begin to recognize the humanity that resides in each of us."

Unfortunately it took coming to prison on a federal indictment to be able to comprehend my personal inner struggle and the lack of appreciation of so many opportunities to make changes.

I could have avoided all of this with one decision and one decision is all it takes to make a whole different outcome. For the rest of my life, I will always refer back to the moment when the choice was mine to make, to do good or bad, I will think about the consequences and remember that one bad decision was all it took to cause so many unfathomably negative results. And I'll choose to do what's good . . . So help me God. Thank you.

Respectfully and Sincerely Submitted,
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